MAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP
OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES

IN UNITY

JANUARY 1982

TV Special Nears Completion

The first 35 minutes of an hour-long T.V. special commissioned by the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches has been shot and the remaining 23 minutes will be filmed in Los Angeles, California and Vancouver, British Columbia within the next two months.

According to Mr. Greg Cutts, one of the two producers of the program, "Forward Focus Productions, Ltd. (the company hired to produce the special) is ready to film the music portion of the program in Los Angeles in January, and finish the 'History of the Fellowship' segment in Vancouver in February."

Greg, with Ms. Mary Anne McEwen, the President of Forward Focus Productions, Ltd., became the founding producers of Gayblevision, now the most popular television show on one of Vancouver's stations. "Cutt's vision of a gay T.V. show and McEwen's professional creative expertise in the film medium combined beautifully," according to local sources, "to bring to the television screen Canada's only gay show, and a show that is unique among gay television shows anywhere."

Utilizing a segmented variety show format, Gayblevision has brought a medley of topics, including politics, profiles, spirituality, drama, comedy, psychiatry, history, music and entertainment to gay audiences in the lower mainland area of British Columbia.

Mary Anne McEwen has over a dozen years experience as a writer and another eight years as a producer and director of films, video and audio/visual productions. A graduate of the University of British Columbia in Fine Arts, English and Anthropology, Mary Anne embarked on her professional career as an advertising copywriter in 1967. She has won many awards in this field, including a Gold Medal for Ocean Odyssey, her book on tugboats.

After writing Sounds of Silence, a half-hour ski film for the British Columbia Government Travel Bureau filmed in 1970, Mary Anne attended Simon Fraser University's film and video workshops for

Continued on Page 3

IN THIS ISSUE

Highlights of 1981 6, 7

Who Do You Say That I Am? 8

Clergy Conference 12

IN UNITY

MAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP
OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES

Offices:
5300 Santa Monica Boulevard • Suite 304
Los Angeles, California 90029 • (213) 464-5100

Liason Elder Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry

Editor Rev. Steve Wilkins

Contributing Photographer Dorian Ford

Editorial Board Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry
Rev. Dusty Pruitt
Rev. Steve Wilkins

IN UNITY is the official organ of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, copyright 1982. All rights reserved. Business offices: Suite 304, 5300 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90029 (213) 464-5100. It is published monthly at these subscription rates: One year (twelve issues) mailed within the United States, Canada and Mexico $9.00. One year (twelve issues) via air mail outside these areas $13.00. All correspondence should be addressed to the Editor at the above address. Fellowship news items, feedback to the magazine, and articles relevant to the spiritual, intellectual and community life of the UFMCC* are encouraged. Reproduction of any part of this magazine by any means is prohibited without written permission. The opinions expressed by the writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the official position of MCC.*

The appearance of a name in this magazine does not denote affectional or sexual preference.

*UFMCC and MCC are the service marks of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

Editorial

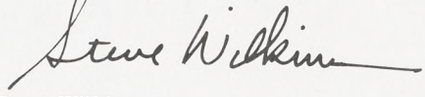
The end of the old year and the beginning of a new year is the time we traditionally reflect on the past and dream of the future. There are elements of both in this month's In Unity. We look back over the last year and realize the progress that has been made. We also look to the future and dream of the day when the entire world will hear the message of God's love for all people.

We are now in the fourteenth year since MCC first started in a living room in Huntington Park, California. The response was great from the very first service. No one had any way to know how many people would be actively interested in participating in a Church that did not discriminate against persons on the basis of sexual preference, or any other quality or trait. But, from the very beginning, it was apparent that this Church was saying something that a lot of people needed to hear.

The problems of UFMCC have not been the problems of stagnation or lethargy. At times it has seemed that the problems have resulted from doing too much, rather than doing too little. In our short history we have met and dealt with issues that "established" Churches have not dealt with in the last several centuries.

We are continuing to look to the future and the challenges of reaching the entire world with the message of liberation through Christ. Our plan to use television media for this purpose shows our commitment to this goal. We are looking forward with the assurance that God is with us and will enable us to do what we have been commissioned to do.

May God richly bless each of you as you look ahead to the challenges you face in the coming year.



Steve Wilkins
Editor

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe:

1. In one triune God, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, of one substance and of three persons: God - our Parent-Creator; Jesus Christ the only begotten son of God, God in flesh, human; and the Holy Spirit - God as our Sustainer.

2. That the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, showing forth God to every person through the law and the prophets, and finally, completely and ultimately on earth in the being of Jesus Christ.

3. That Jesus . . . the Christ . . . historically recorded as living some 2,000 years before this writing, is God incarnate, of human birth, fully God and fully human, and that by being one with God, Jesus has demonstrated once and forever that all people are likewise Children of God, being spiritually made in God's image.

4. That the Holy Spirit is God making known God's love and interest to all people. The Holy Spirit is God, available to and working through all who are willing to place their welfare in God's keeping.

5. Every person is justified by Grace to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

6. We are saved from loneliness, despair and degradation through God's gift of grace, as was declared by our Saviour. Such grace is not earned, but is a pure gift from a God of pure love. We further commend the community of the faithful to a life of prayer; to seek genuine forgiveness for unkind, thoughtless and unloving acts; and to a committed life of Christian service.

7. The Church serves to bring all people to God through Christ. To this end, it shall arrange for regular services of worship, prayer, interpretation of the Scriptures, and edification through the teaching and preaching of the Word.

Co-producer Greg Cutts discusses the days shooting schedule with UFMCC members Terry Luton and Paul at the Houston General Conference.

T.V. SPECIAL NEARS COMPLETION!

Continued from Page 1

two years to learn all aspects of production and post-production in these mediums. She then joined the Association for the Mentally Retarded and worked with psychologists in creating training tapes for teachers of mentally retarded children. With Pacific Motion Picture Associates, she worked in all areas of 16mm. filmmaking, creating travelogues throughout British Columbia. These were bought and released by the British Columbia Government Travel Bureau, the Canadian Government Travel Bureau, and the National Film Board of Canada.

In 1973, Mary Anne moved into the position of Creative Director and Audio/Visual Department Manager of Creative House, Ltd., Western Canada's largest and most successful audio/visual production facility. Over the next five years, she worked as researcher, writer, producer, director, editor, technical producer and sometimes photographer in the areas of audio/visual, multi-media and film presentations for business, industry and government agencies. She produced custom music scores, wrote a half-hour animated television special for children, wrote adaptations of children's books, and supervised all projects in the department.

In 1977, Mary Anne formed her own company, Forward Focus Productions Ltd. She has since written, directed and produced audio/visuals, films, and accompanying support material for business, government and industrial clients. She also worked as a writer on a half-hour made-for-television dramatic film, Burnout, which aired nationally on the CBC in the fall of 1980.

After graduating from York University in Toronto in 1976 with a degree in Psychology, Greg Cutts moved to Vancouver, B.C. and became one of the leading gay organizers and activists in the area.

In July, 1977, Greg established the 1st Annual Gay Unity Coffeehouse, an event that has grown larger and more popular every year. In February of 1978, he was one of the main organizers of the "Rocky Horror Show Party Benefit" for SPAG (the Society for Political Action for Gays), one of the most successful early fund-raising events ever held within the gay community in Vancouver.

Greg joined the "Coming Out" radio show on CFRO (102.7 FM) in early 1978 as a reporter. He worked on this show for the next year and a half, doing on-air reporting, research, and technical work (editing, studio control).

Between May, 1979, and October of the same year, he wrote regularly on news and opinion for the Biline, Vancouver's first and only commercial gay newspaper.

During the Canadian Federal Election in February of 1980, Greg organized and chaired Vancouver's first All-Candidates Meeting for Gays. It was the best attended meeting of the election, and marked the emergence of the gay vote in Vancouver as a political force.

He was elected to the original Board of Directors of the Vancouver Gay Community Centre in March of 1980, and organized the final set-up and production of the VGCC News, the only newspaper serving the gay community in Vancouver at present.

In April of 1980, Greg approached the office of Vancouver's Channel 10 with the idea of producing a television show aimed directly at gay people, a large percentage of whom live in the city. The following month, "Gayblevision" was born, with Greg in the position of co-producer. During the next eight months, he was very actively and busily involved in all aspects of the creation and production of this television show, including directing, camera, sound, lighting, editing, switching and operating the equipment in the mobile van, as well as the portapak VCR. He was heavily involved in setting up the organization behind the show at the same time.

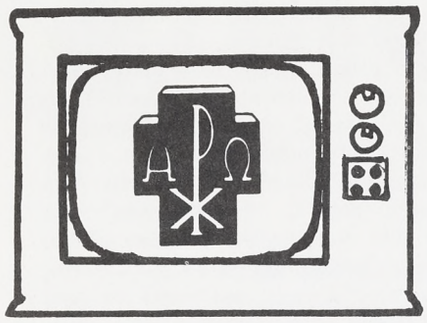
During this peiod, Greg organized and chaired another All-Candidates Meeting for Gays, in October of 1980. This one was in preparation for the Vancouver Municipal Election, and was the largest All-Candidates meeting held during this election. Gayblevision co-sponsored the meeting with "Coming Out" radio and SPAG, produced an hour-long special on the important issues dealt with by the candidates, and it was broadcast city-wide.

Greg is firmly committed to working for gay rights, and believes that, "access to the media by gays is essential in society right now, to make our perspective known. The straight media has shown repeatedly that it only wishes to exploit homosexuals. It is imperative that we give voice to our thoughts and ideas, make our perspective and positions known, and we must do it ourselves, as gay people." Greg further believes that, "gay men and lesbians must work together and with other opposed groups and minorities to achieve our rights through example and education, particularly in regard to the media and its influence in our lives."

Reverend Elder Troy Perry, liaison from the Board of Elders to Forward Focus Productions, Ltd. has stated, "The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is, compared to most other Christian denominations, young and relatively unknown. Even among the gay community it serves, it is not exactly a household word.

"An hour long television program could do much to dispel ignorance about the UFMCC and help to bring Christianity back into the lives of gay people who have fallen away from organized religions due to the prevailing anti-homosexual teachings. If we intend to reach beyond

Continued on Page 10



Media Ministry A New Challenge

An interview with Mr. Bob Johnson Chairperson of the Commission on Media Ministry

IU: We are speaking with Bob Johnson, the Chairperson of the Commission on Media Ministry. Bob, tell us how you came to be involved in the UFMCC.

JOHNSON: I was born and raised in rural eastern North Carolina. I grew up in the Anglican Church. In the early 1960's I moved to Tidewater, VA with my lover, Tom. We became very involved in an Anglican parish there. In May, 1969, Tom was killed in a traffic accident returning home from Washington. When I went to the Rector of our parish to discuss the funeral arrangements, he told me that he had been "overlooking" my relationship with Tom, but could no longer do so. He said that there was no place in the Church for people like me. I had no say about the funeral arrangements. I left the Church at that time.

About six years later I became involved in MCC Wahington DC, about the time of the 1976 General Conference. I became a member that year, and have been very involved since that time, serving on the Board of Directors, as delegate to District and General Conferences.

IU: When did you become interested in media ministry, and how did you get involved with it in UFMCC?

JOHNSON: I have been working on the concept of a media ministry for the Church for several years. This probably grew out of my experience of working in radio and television while in high school and college. In 1977 I joined the National Association of Religious Broadcasters. They did not know what MCC was at that time, and they are not thrilled with it now. I maintain my membership because it is the best way of keeping abreast of what is happening in religious broadcasting in our day.

Two years ago I was appointed by the Board of Elders as the Chairperson of the Elder's Task Force on Media Ministry. In the meantime I have been accumulating data and serving as a source of information for the Board of Elders. After the Houston Conference mandated the establishment of a Commission on Media Ministry, I was appointed by the Board of Elders as the Chairperson of that Commission.

IU: What do you see as being the role of the Commission on Media?

JOHNSON: The Commission has been mandated by the 1981 General Conference in Houston, Texas to develop, and present to the 1983 General Conference in Toronto, an ongoing media ministry program. We will be working to develop a functional, viable program that will enable us to share the good news of God's love to all the people around the world.

IU: Do you feel that UFMCC is really in a position to have a media ministry at this time? Is it a program that should really be important to the Fellowship?

JOHNSON: Yes, it will help local congregations. If you look back to the "Early Church", the Disciples and Apostles were using the most effective means of their day - preaching, writing letters, traveling on ships - to spread the Good News. The local churches grew, as a result. The letters they wrote are now our Scripture.

The Media of our day is the best method we have of sharing the Gospel message. For instance, in Washington, DC, I run into people every week who do not know that there is a Metropolitan Community Church in this town. But those same people listen to radio and watch television. I think it is imperative that we use this opportunity to reach these people.

IU: Do you feel that this method of evangelism will help local congregations?

JOHNSON I not only think it is important, but absolutely necessary! It is probably one of the most important things we are doing right now. There are a lot of women and men, of every age, across America, Canada, and around the world, that may never hear the news of salvation through Jesus Christ if we do not take to the airwaves and tell them that it's alright to be gay and be Christian, and that God still loves them.

IU: I know you cannot speak for the entire Commission at this point, but as Chairperson, how do you see the media ministry developing to show the world the uniqueness of the UFMCC?

JOHNSON: Well, as you said, I cannot speak for the entire Commission and what it will come up with. I have written to the fifteen people whose names I have received from the Board of Elders as being appointed to the Commission. I look forward to working with them to develop the report to the 1983 Conference.

I think we are going to see come out of this process a program that will be soundly based on Scripture, proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to all people - Third World people, feminist women, Hispanics, Chicanos, and every other group of people in our world. I think we have a responsibility to everyone, to include them in our program. A personal "thing" of mine is to include our brothers and sisters who are hearing-impaired. I think these programs should be signed. That is something I plan to work to see included.

I think we need to make it clear that we are a Church for all people - A Christ-centered Church, spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the message of a wholeness of life through a relationship with our God and our Saviour. We must be seen as moving in the mainstream of Christian faith, not in the mainstream of "Television Christianity", as seen through the eyes of Jerry Falwell, Pat Robeson, or some of the other people who are currently using the media. We can do this by reaching out to those in pain, those in need, letting them know that there is a God who loves them, cares for them, and that there is a Church where they can come and be a part of the family of faith.

IU: A question that arose at the Houston Conference was whether this would expose the Universal Fellowship to persecution or problems within the heterosexual community where a lot of our churches exist. Do you see this as a problem?

JOHNSON: I don't think it will be a problem. We are always going to have "kooks" who are going to call one of our clergy at three o'clock in the morning and tell them to read Isaiah 44:10 and fall on their knees and repent. We have this sort of thing happen now, and I don't think being on the media will have much of an effect.

The reality is, media ministry is going to give us a positive image. For one thing, people will see us as "real live human beings". They will realize that we have emotions, needs and feelings. They will see that we have spiritual needs, just as they do, and that we are meeting our spiritual needs through salvation in Jesus Christ.

There may be some initial negative reactions, but as we continue to be seen as a Christian Church that is socially active, looking out for the needs of the less fortunate, the poor, hungry immigrants, and so forth, there are going to be a lot of long-range reactions that will be very positive.

IU: How do you think a Fellowship media program should differ from the programs of, say Oral Roberts, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robeson, the PTL Club, the 700 Club, or should our program be exactly like theirs?

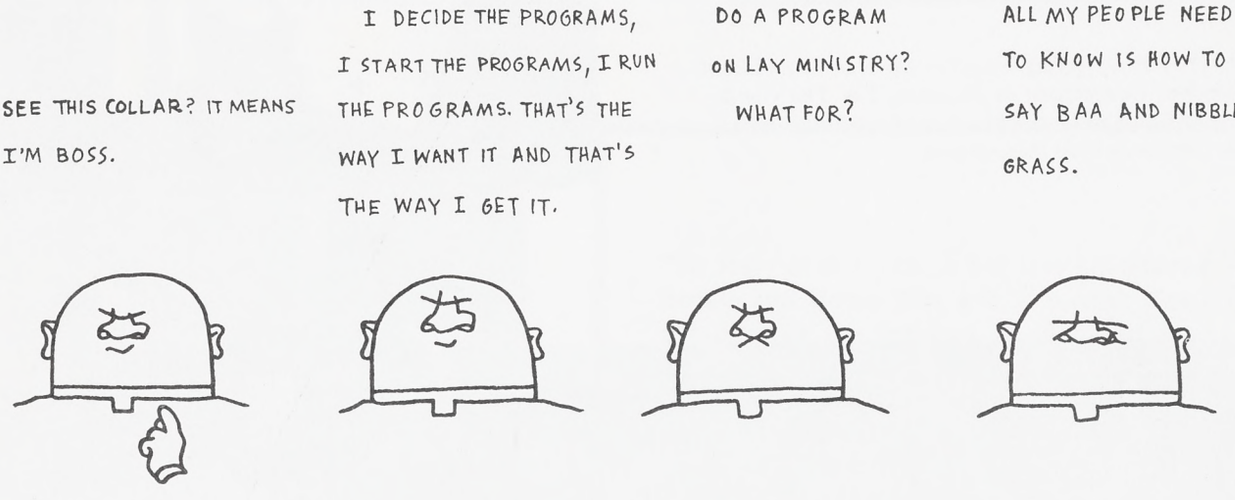
JOHNSON: Well, of course, format, production, and that sort of thing is what the Commission will be dealing with over the next two years. I would like to invite input from anyone in the Fellowship who has ideas on these subjects, whether they have personal expertise, or just feel that God has given them ideas about how to approach this program. Anyone can write to me in care of the Washington, DC, church.

I personally hope that our media program will show the many diverse facets of the Universal Fellowship. I hope it shows us in the streets, meeting people's needs, feeding the hungry, providing shelter for the homeless, helping people with language problems, or meeting whatever the needs of our communities are. We are a living Church, just as the Church described in the Book of Acts, Spirit-filled, Christ-centered, and moving to meet human need.

IU: Thank you, Bob, and may God bless you in this important work.

LAY-UPS

by Jean Gralley

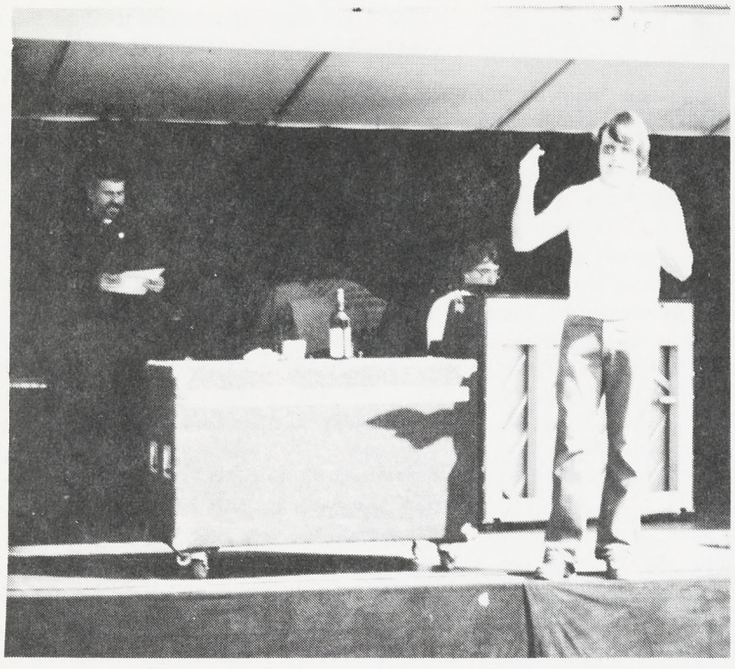

SEE THIS COLLAR? IT MEANS I'M BOSS.
I DECIDE THE PROGRAMS, I START THE PROGRAMS, I RUN THE PROGRAMS. THAT'S THE WAY I WANT IT AND THAT'S THE WAY I GET IT.
DO A PROGRAM ON LAY MINISTRY? WHAT FOR?
ALL MY PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW IS HOW TO SAY BAA AND NIBBLE GRASS.
SEE THIS WOOL? IT MEANS I'M A LAYPERSON.
B-A-A-A-A!
"LAY-PEOPLE": I THINK THAT'S GREEK FOR "UNPROFESSIONAL HUMAN BEINGS." WE SIT A LOT.
LAY MINISTRY? GROW UP? RESPOND? BE THE CHURCH? SORRY, BUT I DON'T SEE THAT AS MY ROLE--
ESPECIALLY WHEN I PULL A LITTLE MORE OF THIS OVER MY EYES---

Rev. Elder Troy Perry giving blood at the Red Cross blood drive at General Conference in Houston, TX. The Conference responded to a need for blood, and a mobile unit was sent to the Conference for this purpose.

Growth in Canada produces two new Districts! As of June 1st, the Canadian District was divided into two new districts by the Board of Elders. At the May District Conference in Toronto, lay and clergy delegates completed the business of the old Canadian District and laid the foundation for the two new Districts.

The Rev. David Gunton, retiring District Co-ordinator, and Elders Smith and Arehart joined together to install the two new District Co-ordinators, the Rev. Lloyd Greenway for the Western Canadian District and the Rev. Brent Hawkes for the Eastern Canadian District.

Arnold Swanson, Co-Worship Co-ordinator of All Saints MCC in West Hollywood, CA, being set aside as a deacon by Rev. Bob Arthur, District Co-ordinator of the Southwest District. A change in the by-laws at General Conference now allows for deacons to be set aside by the District to serve in non-chartered church groups. Also pictured are Rev. Willie Smith, Rev. Steve Wilkins, Rev. Richard Mickley, and Pat Mechem, also serving as Co-worship Co-ordinator for the group.



Rev. Elder Troy Perry holds a Communion service at the Gay Pride Festival on June 21, 1981. The event, sponsored by the Christopher Street West Association, was the largest ever, with attendance going into the hundreds of thousands.

Monday, December 7th, was the occasion of the first big social event of the Holiday Season at King of Peace Metropolitan Community Church of St. Petersburg, Florida, as members and friends gathered for a skating party. The Rev. Joseph Gilbert, second from the left, newly elected Interim Pastor of the congregation is shown with (from left to right) Terry Dieterle, Administrative Assistant, Terry Mullins, member of the Parish Council and Terry Osterhoudt, friend.

Television cameras record the scene as the newly elected Board of Elders is consecrated at the General Conference in Houston, TX.

"In June of last year, a bill was introduced in the Senate and House that will, if passed, dangerously compromise the freedom of all Americans as well as widen the gap between parents and children. This one bill covers such diverse and unrelated subjects as prayer in school, gay civil rights and teacher unionization--all restrictive to personal rights and couched under the deceptive title, "The Family Protection Act." We all must speak out against this bill and the threat it presents to the security and privacy we enjoy."

–Edward Asner, Actor and outspoken supporter of gay rights.

who do you say that I am ?

by Brenda Cisneros Hunt

I have often shook my head and wondered about people who talk of their faith-struggles within UFMCC. I had naively believed that everyone was as gratefully enthusiastic about embracing the new revelation and experiencing ecumenism as I was.

In 1970 I was eager and excited about seeing new truths, listening to new insights; that enthusiasm carried me along for nearly nine years. In a sincere effort to become tolerant, flexible and diversified as a pastor and in the interest of facilitating everyone into being comfortable in corporate worship it seemed the "right thing" to substitute "Sovereign" for "Master and Lord," "Creator and Parent" for "Father", "God's Spirit" for "Holy Ghost". A natural progression from evangelical rhetoric was to substitute "reedeeming power of the Christ-event" for "the blood of Jesus sets us free". The growing debate and contempt across UFMCC between the unitarian-like liberals and the Jesus-only group, causes me distress beyond words. In all the bickering and defending and accusing, we miss the point. The debate borders on idolatry, worshipping a name, a tradition, rather than affirming and reflecting the God Who did it all.

Then a struggle of faith journey planted itself square in the middle of my life. A part of me began aching, at first in reaction to the debate and nonsense, but more now in terms of me personally. I found myself waking in the middle of the night wishing there was someone to call and ask to pray with me . . . who is not liberal, who is not sophisticated. I'd look around before worship for someone to pray for me. Minute by minute I became more dissatisfied with me, my ministry, our churches' ministry. I listened to gospel radio programs and played all of my old Lanny Wolfe albums. As I read the paragraph in the last issue of Evangelical MCCer, words jumped out at me, at first reviving the nausea that comes from watching the debate accusation, then challenging me personally - "fence-rider" and "clergy that cannot or will not define their own faith". I had been real busy being tolerant and ecumenical, and that's all very necessary, but something new needed to happen. I'll think about it. I'll call Jane next week and talk. But then, putting together the bulletin for worship, looking through the gospel, reading from the lectionary . . . "Who do you say that I am" (Matthew 16:15). I reject the manners of self-appointed judges and people who presume to know how and where God deals with everyone else in the world. I will not consciously return to hell-fire and brimstone rhetoric. I will not try to define Jesus to anyone else. The question began to burn, loudly at first . . . then softer and softer till it became a whisper, such a very gentle whisper from a corner of my room. But, Brenda, "Who do you say that I am?"

I pastor the very finest congregation anywhere, our congregation is without equal, we're open, we're generous, we're responsible people working diligently to live the gospel . . . on and on . . . But defining that question would be exclusive, unsophisticated, uncool. Usually there are only about twenty minutes from the beginning of worship till the sermon. That Sunday night it seemed hours, the question continued to burn and beat against my temples. I looked out at the congregation, waiting, participating. Now God, there is no way for me to personally answer that question, not here, not now, the answer will divide, it will alienate, people will not understand, there are too many ties to old things, old words that will close off open hearts. God, how can I possibly? The choir began their anthem after the gospel, "Go In Jehovah's Name".

The answer flowed, stiffly at first, but smoother as the question moved across the congregation. This is a personal question to you, to me. Imagine Jesus talking just to you asking, "Who do you say that I am?" Imagery loses importance, liturgical tradition is lost, sophistication unnecessary. We are people, quiet, sure, real. Answering the question as individuals, we seek the face, the voice of Jesus and we hear Him asking. I know for sure, imagining Jesus ask me; personally my knees would bow, probably tears would come gushing, and I'd tell Him. "You are the Christ, The Messiah, You are God in flesh, You've redeemed me, reconciled me, saved me, from despair, confusion, meaninglessness." The congregation isn't flinching, they are busy answering the question, seeing the humanness of the voice and question, seeing the Divinity of Who Christ is and what He does. His humanness is in His Personalness. His Divinity is in transcendent quality. He touches each one.

And, Jesus, You are the Rose of Sharon . . . not a meaningless phrase describing flowers. I have a younger sister who died shortly after birth. She wasn't talked about except in hushed tones and shrugs. I thought the family just wanted to forget her. One evening I sat on the back porch steps with my mother. We were talking about things that six year olds and their mothers sometimes talk about. I asked her what the name of the flower-tree was near the porch. She said, "That's the Rose of Sharon." My heart skipped a beat. She wasn't forgotten. We have a tree that blooms and is named for her. The bush became a special project after that. There were never weeds around the tree, and it got a special touch in the spring when we white-washed the other trees. Years later when I learned that "Rose of Sharon" is the real name of a flowering bush-tree, I felt a little silly. But Jesus is the Rose of Sharon. In Him all of us are remembered, our names are known. We're united and made a real part of the family.

And Jesus You are the Rock of Ages. That phrase used to move me to giggles, picturing the Prudential advertisements... "Own a piece of the rock" . . . for what? It wasn't even a pretty rock. One of the priorities during our trip to Scotland was

going to Fort William to climb Ben Nevis. the highest peak in Great Britain. We only made it about half way up. Coming down we took turns going ahead, hanging back looking and thinking. I found a spot. Just off the path, a huge rock with the whole mountain behind it, the entire grandeur of the valley before it, a hollowed out place inside the rock, a most perfect lounge chair of sorts. I sat there looking at the valley wishing I had been able to go to the top. As my mind wandered, sitting there where I have always dreamed of being, I pictured other people who had sat in the rock before me, others who had not made it to the top, but rested there and were overcome with the beauty, the mist, the heather, the loch visable in the distance, the sound of bells on the sheep and goats. It didn't seem so important that I hadn't gone to the top. Next time I will or maybe never. There was nothing second best about the view from the rock. Others had sat there, ones who had made it to the top. They must have been moved too by the view from the chair. Shepherds have probably sat there, out of the sun, out of the wind. People had sat in the chair long before America was even discovered, people will continue to sit there for every reason, with every emotion possible. The chair fits all of us . . . any of us . . . from the many places we come from. The rock is ageless, unbiased in who may sit there, who may share in the mountain side and valley beauty . . . comfortable, protective, restful, inspiring. Jesus, You are the Rock of Ages.

And, Jesus, You are a counselor . . . a good one. I've always considered there are three types of counselors - good ones, inept ones, and poor ones. You go into a poor counselor's office, pour out your heart, cry, let the anger or frustration or confusion flow in words and sobs. The counselor tells you its good to cry, hands you a kleenex, pats you on the shoulder, tells you the reasons you're angry, "those people deserve your anger". You leave - same as when you went in - just feeling normal release from the crying. You go into an inept counselor, pour out your heart, cry, shout, or whatever. The enept counselor hands you kleenex and affirms your suspicion that you have a right to be angry or confused. They draw your attention to a pillow in the empty chair - that's your uncle, your mother, all of those people who were responsible for your pain or confusion - yell at them - tell them everything you've been holding back - you do and you feel better, you experience tremendous release. The counselor hugs you, you're on your way, not very different than when you came in. When you go to a good counselor, you're pouring out your heart, everything that ever hurt you. They offer you blue posh-puffs for your tears, listening, nodding, sometimes touching you when you need that, when you're all through describing the pain, you may or may not be directed to yell at the pillow. The good counselor helps you sort through everything and supports you while you decide ways to ACT. You develop some new skills in coping, in relating, see new possibilities. When you leave, you're capable of acting, you don't have to react anymore, you're free of the power that yesterdays would claim. You are independent, stronger, new. Jesus, You are that counselor in my life. You've listened, You've cared, You've held me, wiped tears away and are helping me see new possibilities in me, my life. Sometimes I'll forget and give power back to yesterdays, but I know that's not my only option. I'm different now.

Maybe there are clergy and lay-leaders in UFMCC who cannot or will not define their faith. But people form either extreme do not make that process a healthy or easy one. As people who say we want to exemplify Christ, shouldn't we facilitate, rather than accuse; love, instead of divide? Those of us who are in the process of making a full circle need the space to do that. There are ways to affirm the Sovereignty of Jesus as Christ in my life without using it as a hammer to brow-beat, or a rule book to accuse.

The United Methodist Church publishes a small magazine called Alive. One issue carried a piece of prose that I keep on my desk as a reminder and motivation to more fully embrace the gentle-loving spirit of understanding who Jesus is to me and what that can mean in my life.

> *We like to boast of being born again as if it were an achievement a badge of honor, flaunting it before others, who like Nicodemus came asking but are turned away by our smugness and complacency.*
>
> *This birth of pride bears little resemblance to spirit-listening and believing. When will we know that rebirth is no achievement except to the road of life?*

--Rev. Brenda Cisneros Hunt is pastor of MCC Detroit

HUNGER WALK

On Sunday, 22 November 1981, MCC in the Valley participated in the World Hunger Walk sponsored by C.R.O.P. In its very first time as a participating congregation, 47 members and friends of the church walked 10 miles each to raise $3,100 in the fight against world hunger.

All totaled, 292 walkers from various churches throughout San Fernando Valley (California) participated in the event and together they raised $16,000. MCC in the Valley contributed $1,100 more than any other single church.

The Valley's walkers were highly conspicuous with colorful ballons provided by two women of the congregation who operate "Bunches of Balloons." The MCC in the Valley walkers were warmly received by the other participants, thus continuing strong work in community coalition building. In fact, MCC in the Valley received a standing ovation from the members of the Valley Interfaith Executive Council in their meeting following the walk.

Advertisement

SHARING AND GROWING

By Rev. Richard R. Mickley, M.A.

Rev. Mickley has taken a leave of absence to obtain a doctor's degree in Clinical Psychology.

He has obtained his master's degree in counseling psychology and his master's thesis is a handbook of enrichment ideas intended for use as a self-help manual for gay men in a committed relationship, or for those who wish they were, or for those who counsel men in committed gay relationships.

The thesis offers a smorgasbord of ideas for sharing and growing together in a way that will enrich their relationship and their lives. It applies sound techniques of marriage therapy and recognizes and interprets factors that are distinctively pertinent to gay men, such as male bonding, high rapport and escalating symmetry.

210 typewritten pages containing self-help ideas for making your relationship what you want it to become, whatever you want it to become.

Special price for In Unity readers. Send $15 to SHARING and GROWING, Dept. I, Box 2645, Los Angeles, CA 90051.

Inquiries welcome from bookstores

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

I take strong exception to the content and tone of the unattributed article entitled "UFMCC and El Salvador" in your latest issue.

I found it to be completely unhelpful in aiding our Fellowship in understanding the complex tragedy of the strife in El Salvador. It chose to be bombastic rather than clear, manipulative rather than enabling, and partisan rather than insightful. I am most certainly not one who believes that the Church should remain aloof from politics or movements for social change. I am not even one who believes that there are not some situations so tragic that the least evil path is to take up arms. But we abandon our role as mediators of Christ's truth by making ourselves but one more voice mouthing uncritically the current partisan claptrap. We should seek rather to look with honesty at the entirety of the civil war there, search out truth and tell it fearlessly. This we cannot do if we choose to join a "side."

Terrorist violence, so graphically portrayed in the opening paragraph of that article, is surely no monopoly of the Salvadorian army or its supporters. Both the extreme right, which runs the Army (outside of any effective control by the centrist Christian Democratic junta) and the extreme left which makes up the insurgent FDR, routinely use murderous violence against each other and both join in massacring those who seek a middle course.

The Rev. Montague and the Southwest District may wish to pray for a military victory for the Marxist, totalitarian left. I would rather we prayed for justice and liberty for all of El Salvador and for an end to the brutality and murder on both sides.

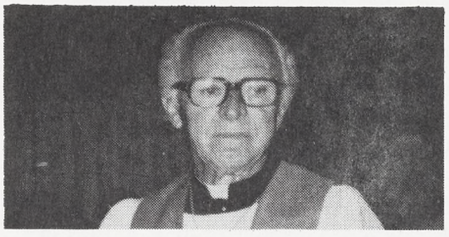
Sincerely,

Rick Weatherly, Staff Clergy
MCC San Francisco

Thank you, Rev. Weatherly for responding to the article. I realize that there are a wide variety of viewpoints within our Fellowship on many issues. I appreciate persons who are willing to share their viewpoints with all of us. May we all pray for peace in our world.

–Editor

"PAPA PAUL" AILING



"Papa Paul" Van Hecke, the oldest ordained clergy in the Universal Fellowship, has recently been moved from home to a Convalescent Hospital. His son, B.C. Van Hecke, wrote to his friends recently to tell them how he is doing and to explain the health problems he has been having.

He wrote, "Dad's memory has been failing. He now remembers everything that happened sixty years ago, but not much of what happened a few hours ago. He does remember friends, but may not remember specific incidents.

"Several weeks ago he began to lose his equilibrium and would fall for no reason. I was forced to put him into a convalescent hospital since I could no longer give him the 24 hour a day care he needs.

"It hurt me a great deal to put him in the hospital, since I was afraid he would not last very long away from home. My Mother passed away on May 2nd, as you know. However, Dad is doing very well so far. He tells me that everyone else in the home is crazy and senile, and he does not want to become like them. He is working very hard at walking and exercising, and there is a chance that he will be able to be moved to a retirement home, if he continues to improve."

"Papa Paul", as he is affectionately known throughout the Fellowship, was ordained at the Third General Conference on September 3, 1972. He is now 84 years old. He was an ordained minister in the Nazarene Church, was graduated from Bresee Nazarene College in Pasadena, CA, and spent many years doing evangelistic work in that denomination.

After becoming ordained in UFMCC, "Papa Paul" made a number of evangelistic tours of the country. He has worked with local congregations in Dallas, TX, Fresno, CA, and Pomona, Ca. He is currently Clergy Emeritus on staff at MCC Los Angeles.

"Papa Paul" would enjoy receiving cards and letters from his friends and family in UFMCC. You can write to him at: Granada Hills Convalescent Hospital
16123 Chatsworth Street
Granada Hills, CA 91344

TV SPECIAL

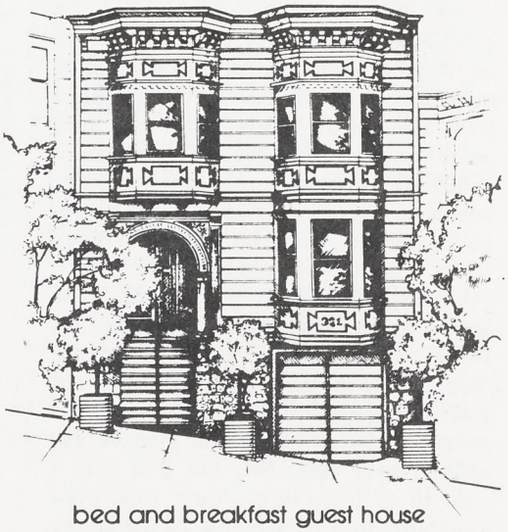
Continued from Page 3

the already knowledgeable, if we desire to touch the hearts, intellects and lives of the often skeptical and sometimes bitter gay former Christians, it would seem reasonable to aim this television special at a general audience.

"In order to attract and keep the attention of such an audience, the program should be informative, interesting, entertaining and unbiased. A positive view of UFMCC done in a documentary style with some elements of 'religious programming' would therefore be an appropriate method of communicating the story of the church and the message of God's love for all people. It is an unconventional but beautiful message . . . that God loves homosexuals and that it is not impossible nor incompatible to be both gay and Christian. The documentary style will make this message infinitely more credible, more persuasive, more powerful, and more convincing to the television audience.

"The theme of the television special will be that homosexuals are the children of God, too . . . something that most gays forget and straights don't normally believe."

Perry went on to state, "the only thing that will slow up the airing of our special will be the money to finish paying for the production cost. We must raise those needed funds immediately if we are to have the special aired by late March or early April."



bed and breakfast guest house
reservations requested

INN ON CASTRO
321 castro st. · san francisco
94114 · (415) 861·0321

THE FINAL TRUTH ?

A BOOK REVIEW
by Frank J. Howell

Sexual Preference: Its Development in Men and Women. By Alan Bell, Martin Weinburg and Sue Kiefer Hammersmith, Indiana University Press - $16.00

"At the moment a large body of convincing research appears to suggest a biological foundation for homosexuality, at least among some people."

In my teens my parents took me to a doctor (in this case, read *quack*) when my gayness manifested itself. A series of tests involving urine samples were conducted. The "doctor" concluded that an excess of female hormones was the villain. More virile masculine chemicals were needed, said he, in order to produce a wholesome, All-American boy.

In a certain ironic sense the old practitioner may have strayed closer to the truth than was evident at the time. Scientists today are quite sure that male hormones control not the direction of the sex urge but merely the strength. Nevertheless, such earnest tinkering with my virgin body was to no avail. We shall return to the subject of biology presently.

During the last ten years the traditional approaches to sexology research have shattered. The conventional wisdom of the analyst and his/her couch is under fierce attack. Doubt and confusion reign supreme.

The Institute For Sex Research in Indiana (Kinsey) has long challenged popular notions about human sexuality. In 1948 Dr. Kinsey informed us that many of our neighbors used positions that missionaries never even dreamed of. Now comes the latest and most controversial challenge. In this newest study the emperors clothes are finally removed.

Dr. Alan Bell, Professor of Education, and his co-researchers (Weinberg and Hammersmith, both sociologists) have completed the final portion of their monumental study of gay men and women in the San Francisco Bay Area. The sample consisted of 979 homosexuals matched with 477 heterosexuals in 1970.

We can sum up much of the findings by saying that no specific cause of gayness could be detected. No particular set of non-biological circumstances were pinned down. The parents are now off the Freudian hook of guilt, the peer group is blameless, and society at large can stop examining itself.

The common traits that are attributed to gays are often on the mark, but even here we can be deceived by appearances. Labeling simply confirms what a person thinks of themself. At a very early age the attitudes of homosexuals are already securely in place. The environment performs whatever results from this basic fact. As Bell and company express it, ". . .social isolation is more likely to reflect the differences between homosexual and heterosexual males than to contribute to such differences."

And again, ". . .parental relationships, traits, or identification should not be construed as critical factors in the development of female homosexuality." If parents are a contributing factor, the father should be singled out more than the mother. But even here the data suggests that the link is still not sufficiently strong to warrent any finger pointing.

Gender nonconformity is the most powerful predictor of gay love (the boy who would rather read than play baseball or the girl who is a tom boy). Feelings and the core sexual identity of the individual are the key factors. This is expecially true in the case of gays who are not obvious in their behavior and appear to act quite straight.

Toward the conclusion of the study our friends from Indiana also consider the evidence regarding effecminate males, blacks, and bisexuals. Here the sample was much smaller by by and large the same basic conclusions can be drawn.

Highlights-

Overt behavior rather than feelings are more significant in predicting the gay behavior of blacks.

Effeminate males are more influenced by negative relations with their fathers.

Bisexuals are more open to conversion to heterosexuality than gays who are exclusively homosexual.

After reviewing this mountain of charts and graphs the conclusion is reached that the origins of the love that now shouts its name may well be organic in nature. We may just as well look to the physiology and chemistry of the womb or the mechanics of heredity than what takes place in the home. The hands that rock the cradle might as well relax. In the final chapter the Institue for Sex Research urges researchers and scholars to turn their energies in this promising new direction.

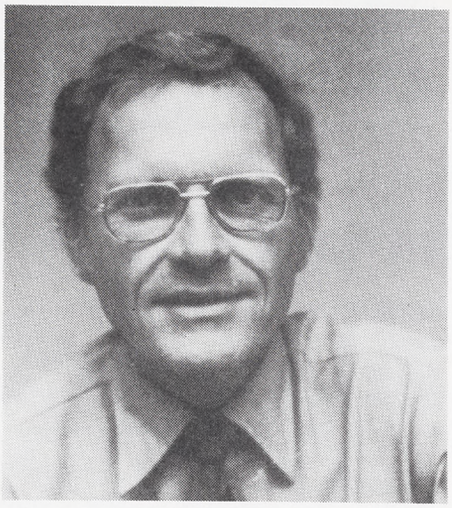
So where does this lead us? Towards civil rights, we would hope, and away from the psychiatrist's office. This is not to say we need to buy into the argument that the study of homosexuality should cease. This would be like the ravings of a mad prophet in the street who believes that any scientific inquiry is wrong, gay or straight. The curious mind should continue to probe for the same reason that adventurers continue to climb Mt. Everest - because it is there. Science should never be pursued because someone has a score to settle. It must follow the truth wherever it leads.

Sexual Preference opens up a whole new bag of worms or perhaps a new chapter. The members of the Moral Majority might be forced to re-examine their assumptions about human sexuality. What a refreshing idea!

Frank J. Howell is a member of Golden Gate MCC in San Francisco. He is a professional librarian whose book reviews have been published in community publications in the Bay area.

Western Clergy Conference

DR. JAMES NELSON



MS. SHARON TOBIN

The historic Roosevelt Hotel in Hollywood, California will be the site of the Western Clergy Conference to be held January 26-29, 1982. An exciting program of speakers and seminars has been arranged, and this conference promises to be an enriching and uplifting experience for all participants.

The featured speaker for the Conference will be Dr. James B. Nelson. He is perhaps best known for his widely acclaimed book Embodiment (Augsburg, 1978) on a theology of sexuality. Dr. Nelson is Professor of Christian Ethics at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities (Minnesota). He has a PhD from Yale, and has studied at Oxford and Cambridge. Dr. Nelson is a United Church of Christ clergy, and has pastored Congregational Churches. His long-term interests have been medical ethics, theology, sexuality and homosexuality. He has been a visiting faculty member and lecturer at the University of Minnesota Medical School, and in the program of Human Sexuality at the University of Minnesota. Reverend Elder Nancy Wilson said, "We are looking forward to this important opportunity to share with Dr. Nelson."

Another feature of the Conference will be a seminar on "Ministry, grief and loss" presented by Ms. Sharon Tobin, a licensed social worker who specializes in the area of loss, grief and death. The seminar, which will be both experiential and didactic, will have restricted enrollment on a first come, first served basis. Ms. Tobin says, "I feel it is important that those who will be ministering to grieving persons first deal with their own feelings of grief and loss. This seminar will provide a safe environment in which to begin to deal with personal feelings of loss, whether that loss involves death, separation from others, or feelings of alienation from the important people in our lives."

Samaritan Theological Institute will be presenting a seminar on continuing education for clergy. This seminar will assist clergy in learning how to locate and finance educational opportunities in their areas. There will be discussion on needs, feelings and attitudes toward continuing education, and there will be practical help given in locating resources. Rev. Jeffrey Pulling, Director of the STI Resource Center in San Francisco will be leading the seminar.

A workshop on Evangelism in local churches and districts will be led by Rev. Austine Amerine. Rev. Amerine is the District Coordinator of the Northwest District, and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in evangelism. The workshop will be an opportunity to discuss methods of outreach to local communities.

The Conference services will be coordinated by Rev. Rick Weatherly. Rev. Jane Carl and Rev. Don Eastman will be preaching. The worship services will be times of inspiration and renewal.

The Conference will offer times for social activity as well. There will be a reception held at the Fellowship offices, and STI is hosting an art show of gay and lesbian artists.

The conference is being held at the historic Roosevelt Hotel in the heart of Hollywood. The Hotel was the site of many of the early Academy Awards presentations, and is directly across the street from the famous Grauman's Chinese Theatre. There are excellent transportation connections to the airport, and many other places of interest in the Hollywood/Los Angeles area.

This Conference will be a great time of growing and sharing, learning and inspiration. We will be sharing with you, in future issues, the important things that will be happening.

Also, we are looking forward to the Eastern Clergy Conference scheduled for April 21-25, 1982. This has tentatively been scheduled to be held in Edgewater, Maryland. More information can be obtained by writing to Fellowship offices.